

for 48 States and the hurricane season is not over yet. The Commerce Department said this year we have had 10 disasters, each with more than \$1 billion in damage, and \$1 billion is an understatement when you talk about what happened with Irene. They say that will reach \$25 billion, that one storm. That is the most we have had in decades—probably the most ever.

No one should be surprised that the Federal Emergency Management Agency is about broke. As of today, they have a few hundred million dollars left, probably in the \$300 million range. In just the last 2 weeks, FEMA spent almost \$400 million out of the fund for Hurricane Irene and other disasters. That should not be out of that fund. That should be forward funded. So FEMA is dangerously close to running out of money.

To make sure FEMA will have enough money to meet the immediate needs for food, water, and emergency housing for victims of new disasters, on August 28 FEMA stopped approving funding for disaster recovery projects from past disasters. This means funding is on hold to rebuild schools, hospitals, roads, public utilities from past disasters like Katrina, Rita, Gustav, and Ike, the Mississippi River flood of 2008—they are still doing work there to renovate that area—the Tennessee flood of 2010 and tornadoes in Missouri and Alabama of days past. So we have hundreds of millions of dollars that need to be spent in places such as Joplin, MO. They are not spending money there in Joplin, MO. After all they have been through there, no money.

The need is urgent. That is why we are seeking to move to the House-passed revenue measure to serve as a vehicle for disaster relief. The House insists, as they should, that because of our Constitution's Origination Clause, all appropriation measures have to originate in the House. So we had to take a bill—the House bill we have here on the calendar—and that is why we have to move to the Burma revenue measure tonight to allow the Senate to address this disaster assistance.

The Burma sanctions bill is a bill that the Republican leader has been out in front of for ages. He has been the watchdog of this terrible war and adverse nature that is taking place in Burma. He has been out front on this issue, and I appreciate that very much.

Every year we pass these Burma sanctions unanimously. No one opposes them. The only reason anyone might be holding up this Burma sanctions bill is because my friends on the other side of the aisle, the Republicans, do not want to allow the Senate to vote on disaster assistance. Why do we need to do that? How much more specific do I need to be? We need to help communities hit hard by flooding, tornadoes, hurricanes, and other acts of God. I would think twice if I were one of my Republican friends. I have gone over some of the areas where these tornadoes and these fires and other natural

disasters have occurred and this is our only hope of getting help for these States.

The House is indicating they are going to send us a bill, but they are playing around the edges of what needs to be done. We have a bill that was reported basically out of the Senate Appropriations Committee—from Democrats and from Republicans—supporting it. What is needed is about \$9 billion. We want to be in keeping with the Budget Deficit Reduction Act because in there we are allowed \$7 billion. That is the number we are going to put forward tomorrow on this bill. It would be a real shame if we are not allowed to move to this Burma sanctions bill because everyone voting no to proceed to this is voting no on assistance to these States. There is no other way to do it. We are not going to accept some small number the House sends over. We cannot do that. The House is planning on doing some of its usual stuff—I will say that in a positive sense—in sending us a continuing resolution that we must enact by the end of this month, and they want to stick in the funding for FEMA, which is very low. We cannot allow that to happen.

I hope everyone tonight at 5:30 will vote to allow us to go forward on this most important piece of legislation.

I would ask that the quorum call begin.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Morning business is now closed.

APPROVING THE RENEWAL OF IMPORT RESTRICTIONS CONTAINED IN THE BURMESE FREEDOM AND DEMOCRACY ACT OF 2003—MOTION TO PROCEED

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will resume consideration of the motion to proceed to H.J. Res. 66, which the clerk will report.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

Motion to proceed to the joint resolution (H.J. Res. 66) approving the renewal of import restrictions contained in the Burmese Freedom and Democracy Act of 2003.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the time during the quorum call I am about to suggest be divided equally between the majority and the minority.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. REID. I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. SESSIONS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. SESSIONS. Mr. President, our country is in a very serious economic crisis. We are told by Mr. Erskine Bowles and Senator Alan Simpson—Erskine Bowles was chosen by President Obama to head his debt commission. They gave a statement to the Budget Committee, on which I am ranking member, that this Nation has never faced a more predictable economic crisis based on the size of our debt. All of us know that.

The American people are angry with us. They cannot believe it is possible we are borrowing 40 cents of every dollar we spend. We are spending \$3.7 trillion this fiscal year ending September 30. We will take in \$2.2 trillion, give or take a few hundred billion. This is not acceptable. We cannot continue.

How did it happen? How is it possible we are borrowing 40 cents of every dollar that goes out the door, increasing the permanent debt of the United States? Well, one way is what is happening now before us on the bill that is being moved today by Majority Leader REID. It would add \$6.9 billion to the FEMA account for emergencies. We just saw the legislation less than an hour ago, maybe 30 minutes ago. Has anybody given any serious thought to that? Seven billion dollars? The general fund budget of the State of Alabama is \$2 billion.

Mr. President, \$7 billion is a lot of money, and we have not looked at it, we have not thought about it. It is above the budget, I guess above our budget numbers. We do not have a budget. Senator REID said earlier this year it would be foolish to have a budget—foolish to have a budget. We are now well over 860 days in this Senate without having passed a budget. Is that another reason we are spending the country into bankruptcy?

Well, I do not think this is an appropriate thing. I strongly oppose adding another emergency debt spending bill where we have not carefully examined every penny of it to make sure it is all necessary and appropriate. No one has seen those numbers and the analysis that would justify it.

I come from a State that was hammered with the worst series of tornadoes we have ever suffered in Alabama. I have been to those communities and towns and seen those families who have lost all they had, who have lost loved ones and have injured family members. I know we are going to need to have emergency spending for those programs. We have fires in Texas and we also have flooding. We know that.

We have certain money set aside for emergencies already. How much more do we need to spend? I do not know yet.